

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRAGUE 3554

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, GE, GW, CZ
SUBJECT: GDR RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA, FRG

REF: BERLIN 7260

1. GDR AMBASSADOR GERD KOENIG MAY HAVE JUST FINISHED READING
SED POLITBURO REPORT TO FOURTH CC PLUNUM (REFTEL) WHEN I
CALLED ON HIM DECEMBER 15, SINCE HIS STATEMENTS WERE SO FINELY
TUNED -- EVEN IN PRECISE WORDING -- TO THAT REPORT.

2. IN A FREINDLY BUT SOMEWHAT GUARDED CONVERSATION, KOENIG
CHARACTERIZED GDR-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS AS "VERY GOOD"
WHEN IT CAME TO POLITICS, BUT ADMITTED THAT THERE WAS SOME
COMPETITION IN TRADE OWING TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF INDUSTRIALIZATION
IN BOTH COUNTRIES. NOTING THAT GDR AND CSSR ARE EACH OTHERS'
SECOND BIGGEST TRADING PARTNERS, DOING OVER ONE BILLION
"CONVERTIBLE RUBLES" WORTH OF TRADE ANNUALLY, KOENIG SAID THE
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TWO COUNTRIES HOPED TO ELIMINATE MOST OF THE DUPLICATION OF EFFORT
IN THEIR TWO INDUSTRIAL SECTORS BY 1980.

3. ON GDR-FRG RELATIONS, KOENIG ECHOED SED POLITBURO REPORT
BY POINTING TO GROWING "REVANCHISM" IN THE FRG, EFFORTS TO TIE
WEST BERLIN MORE CLOSELY TO FRG AND DIFFERING FRG AND GDR

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HELSINKI AND QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS. HE ALSO STRESSED GDR'S READINESS TO "REACT FAVORABLY TO ANY POSITIVE PROPOSAL" OF THE FRG. HE SAID THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS THAT "MANY PEOPLE" STILL REFUSE TO ACCEPT GDR AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, "INFLUENTIAL" -- HE IMPLIED INDUSTRIAL - CIRCLES IN THE FRG, FEARING ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS, ARE DISTURBED AT THE RECENT DOWNTURN IN FRG--GDR RELATIONS.

4. BIO NOTES: KOENIG, WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN IN PRAGUE FOR MORE THAN THREE YEARS, GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE MIGHT LEAVE SOON, SAYING THAT THE TENDENCY THESE DAYS WAS FOR GDR AMBASSADORS TO STAY IN PLACE FOR A LONGER TIME THAN PREVIOUSLY. VERY MUCH AT EASE, THE 46 YEAR OLD KOENIG SEEMS VIGOROUS AND SELF CONFIDENT. HE SPEAKS WITH ENTHUSIASM AND CONVICTION. HE COMPREHENDS ENGLISH BUT PREFERS TO SPEAK THROUGH AN INTERPRETER.
BYRNE

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